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FOR DC USE ONLY

NO.: CA - 1574, August 15, 1958

SUBJECT: Maintenance and Disposal of Issued Visa Files

TO: All American Diplomatic and Consular Posts

Effective immediately, all posts are authorized to destroy case files pertaining to issued immigrant visas 16 months after date of issuance. Files pertaining to issued nonimmigrant visas shall be destroyed 48 months after date of issuance.

The methods for organizing, maintaining and destroying these files, as set forth below, should be followed by all posts except as specifically authorized under C below.

A. Issued Immigrant Visa Files

Upon receipt of this instruction all posts shall take steps to destroy those files pertaining to visas which were issued more than 16 months previously. Each post should then establish storage space sufficient to hold 17-18 months of issued files, taking into account possible increases in the rate of issuance during the next three years. For posts using shelving for storage purposes, a suggested arrangement has been developed, as shown in Enclosure 1.

After actions have been noted on the quota waiting list, issued immigrant visa files should be tied together securely in bundles. On the outside of each bundle, the date or dates of issuance should be clearly marked. Files should be removed from folders, if any, first. Posts may arrange cases alphabetically within bundles if they desire, but this is not necessary.

The frequency with which the cases should be tied in bundles will depend on the number of immigrant visas each post issues. It is suggested that posts issuing 250 or less visas per year, prepare a bundle once a month; posts issuing 250 to 500 visas prepare a bundle every two weeks; posts issuing 500 to 1000 visas prepare a bundle weekly; and posts issuing more than 1000 visas per year prepare a bundle daily.

After the files pertaining to visas issued on a given day (week, two weeks or month) are tied into a package and clearly labeled, the package

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6/10-7/11/58

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package should be placed on the proper section of shelving or in the designated place selected for inactive storage. At the same time the bundle which is 16 months old should be removed and destroyed. For example, when the bundle for June 5, 1958 is put in storage, the package for February 5, 1957 would be removed and destroyed. In the illustration in Enclosure 1, by the time space allocated for July 1958 files is filled, that previously allocated for February and March 1957 files will be empty and the August 1958 files may be stored there. The cycle would be continued in succeeding months.

B. Issued Nonimmigrant Visa Files

Files pertaining to issued nonimmigrant visas should be maintained and destroyed in the same manner, except on a 48 months cycle. To facilitate this, the files should, of course, be maintained separately from the issued immigrant cases. Because the documentation on any one nonimmigrant case will be less than on immigrant cases, the bundles will have to be prepared less frequently.

C. Exceptions

Any post which, because of investigative requirements calling for analysis of old visa files for the tracing of family connections ("slots") or for other unusual reason, is convinced that proper visa operations require longer retention of issued visa files than is provided above, shall, before implementing this instruction and within ten working days of its receipt, report the full facts by operations memorandum headed: "Records Management". Copies of each such request shall be forwarded separately in envelopes marked: "Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, Executive Officer" and "Visa Office, Operations and Procedures Branch".

HERTER (ACTING)

Enclosure:

Suggested Shelving Arrangement.

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